Commandant's NOTE

MAJOR GENERAL JERRY A. WHITE Chief of Infantry

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Infantrymen everywhere, especially those who have been directly associated with the Infantry School, will understand the full measure of my pride in returning to Fort Benning as Commandant of the School and Chief of Infantry. Yet this pride is overshadowed by an awareness of the many obligations and heavy responsibilities that accompany this high honor. I assure all Infantrymen that I am fully mindful of the scope of these tasks and of the challenges the future holds for us.

It has been wisely observed that the history of our great Nation is in a sense the history of the United States Army. Surely it can be seen that the history of our Army is, in essence, the compilation of the deeds of Infantrymen from Concord to Kuwait. In fact, everything we do in the Army is done with one goal in mind—to see that Infantry soldiers and units are properly trained and equipped, to get them where they are needed, and to keep them doing what they have to do. It is these Infantrymen, strengthened and supported by its many comrades-in-arms, that is the U.S. Army in action. The successful efforts of our entire Army literally stem from the frequently unheralded but essential accomplishments of the foot soldier.

How well the soldier does his job depends for the most part on the quality of his training and the quality of his leaders. It is this pressing demand for high quality training and leadership that imparts unusual urgency to the mission of the Infantry School. My own experiences, particularly while serving recently as commander of the 7th Infantry Division (Light), have convinced me that today's soldier is the finest that has ever represented our country on any battlefield. He is certainly entitled to the finest leadership at all levels.

In the short time I have been at Benning, I have found that the officers, enlisted soldiers, and civilians who will help me serve you have a deep sense of commitment to the Infantry soldier. They also possess a new sense of urgency to exploit the lessons we have learned from our recent combat experiences, and to project the Infantryman into every conceivable combat environment. This is in keeping with the School's primary mission of producing the world's finest Infantryman.

But we cannot rest on our past laurels. The future presses on us with all its attendant unknowns. To maintain our edge we must make constant progress toward improved doctrine, more effective weapons and equipment, and, most of all, better trained soldiers.

The challenge of mobile warfare, as was recently demonstrated in the deserts of Southwest Asia, is one of the many facing us. Few leadership positions require a broader span of knowledge or a greater store of tactical proficiency than that of the Infantry leader in a mobile warfare environment. Accordingly, they must be masters of Infantry tactics and techniques and must prepare themselves and their units to fight as members of combined arms teams.

As we have also seen, tomorrow's battles will

not end at sundown. To fight those battles, we must be trained and equipped to fight through darkness, smoke, and other obscuration. We must also be physically capable of sustaining an operation until the battle is won. We truly must master the night.

Too, we cannot forget the challenges we face at the lower end of the operational continuum, in low intensity conflict. The challenges in that area have been spelled out for us most clearly in an article in the last issue of INFANTRY by James R. Locher III, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. Secretary Locher reminds us that since the end of World War II, U.S. military forces "have been involved—directly and indirectly—in 48 major low intensity conflicts around the world" and that "despite our overwhelming military superiority, we have not been able to deter or to effectively fight low intensity conflicts."

Fighting of this nature places a high premium on individual and unit discipline, perseverance, initiative, and mental and physical toughness, as well as unit morale and esprit. In this environment, the Infantryman may be called on to fight and win against a fanatical enemy in mountains, jungles, and swamps.

To train more efficently across the operational continuum, the Infantry School participates in many of the Army's simulation projects and it will continue to do so. The School has at all times emphasized the design and use of simulations to support specific training and analytical objectives. Many of these are gaming simulations, in which the motivational aspects of a competitive game are combined with a physical, symbolic, or procedural representation of a real-world situation.

The reasons for using these and other simulations today are even better than they were when we began using them. Not only will we have fewer resources than in years past, there will be an ever-increasing demand on those we will have—resources in manpower, equipment, ammunition, and POL, as well as in travel and training time. While we recognize that simulations can add value to our training programs, we at the School do not want to trade OPTEMPO hours for simulations. We cannot replace training realism in MILES-supported exercises or in live fire exercises.

Many exciting high technology developments are in the offing that will eventually be incorporated into our training. We fully intend to participate in and influence those developments to ensure that the end products meet our needs.

Each of us can contribute to the kind of Infantry we will have in the year 2000. There is a definite need for ideas from the field and we hope you will step forward. The soldier in the field is the one most plagued by problems, and he is also the one who is most eager for solutions. Any soldier who has an idea that might help us in our endeavors should bring it forward for examination. The key to our success is open and frank communication. Let us hear from you!